| Setting                  | Find a quiet location; private if possible.  
                             Invite the important people to be present.  
                             Have tissues and enough chairs.  
                             Turn off the ringer on your phone/pager. |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Perception               | “Tell me what you understand about your illness.”  
                             “What have the other doctors told you about your illness?”  
                             Look for knowledge and emotional information as the patient responds |
| Invitation               | “Would it be okay for me to discuss the results of your tests with you now?”  
                             “How do you prefer to discuss medical information in your family?”  
                             “Some people prefer a global picture of what is happening and others like all the details, what do you prefer?” |
| Knowledge                | Give a warning... “I have something serious we need to discuss”  
                             Avoid medical jargon. Say it simply and stop. (e.g. “Your cancer has spread to your liver. It is getting worse despite our treatments.”) |
| Empathy                  | Wait quietly for the patient.  
                             “I know this is not what you expected to hear today.” “This is very difficult news.” |
| Summary                  | “We’ve talked about a lot of things today, can you please tell me what you understand.”  
                             “Let’s set up a follow-up appointment.” |

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www.ethics.va.gov/goalsofcaretraining/practitioner.asp